

# Lancaster County Progressions

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**EDC, EDC Finance Corporation, and LancasterProsper Staff**



(from left to right) John Biemiller, Annette Bart, Jean Carroll, Nora Weder and David Nikoloff. Five people that work hard for one great County!



## Immersed in Lancaster County

Although the weather loomed dreary while touring, the beauty and opportunity of Lancaster County was clearly evident to Lynn Martin Haskin of Development Counsellors International (DCI), an economic development and tourism marketing firm. Recently retained by the LancasterProsper Marketing strategy action group and EDC, DCI is to help attract growing businesses that fit within targeted industry clusters to Lancaster County urban areas, as outlined in the LancasterProsper County-wide plan.

to small- and medium-sized companies.”

One purpose of the immersion tour, according to DCI, is to assess the properties and real estate that constitute the “inventory” prospective companies take into account when considering Lancaster County as a viable alternative for their business expansion.

On another leg of the tour, DCI met with business, community and political leaders to discuss a wide range of issues affecting the area. “We were very pleased with the participation we

**“Get a feeling for the industry clusters.”**

received from municipal and state officials and many business and community leaders who gave a lot of time and varying perspectives to help DCI become familiar with the area,” noted David Nikoloff, EDC’s Executive Director. “It has been a very positive experience for all of us as we scrutinize the landscape and determine the viability of various sites in preparation for attracting businesses to the area.”

**“...understanding the fabric of the community.”**

“We look for what makes Lancaster County special. We need to develop an understanding of the fabric of the community. This is vital to marketing Lancaster’s assets

**Quality of life plays an important role in attracting businesses to the County. The new stadium increases social & family amenities for all County residents.**

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## Letter from the Executive Director

# Attracting Business to Lancaster County

Partnerships for business attraction— That's the common thread in this issue of "Progressions" as a LancasterProsper initiative gets under way, an Elizabethtown Borough development project is announced and entrepreneurs get an opportunity to discuss issues affecting them.

**Marketing:** Development Counsellors International (DCI), an economic development and tourism marketing firm, prepared themselves for the LancasterProsper efforts of marketing Lancaster County by participating in an "immersion tour" (see front page article). In addition to helping DCI realize what the County has to offer to outside companies, the tour gave community and business leaders, as well as municipal and state officials, the opportunity to offer DCI insight into the County's current business climate.

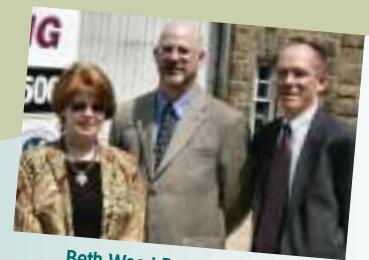
**Clean-up:** In Elizabethtown, we've been working with the Borough, the Chamber of Commerce and Elizabethtown's

Economic Development Corporation to purchase and clean-up a large parcel of land that has been a blight to the community. Peter Whipple and his colleagues have shown great vision in getting their community ready to attract business to an exciting area.

**Entrepreneurial Spirit:** Attracting and encouraging an upstart business is the goal of a LancasterProsper action group. On the next page, read about its efforts to make the motivated entrepreneurs' dreams of running their businesses a little easier.

Working behind the scenes on all of these projects is a staff of dedicated EDC professionals whom I'm very proud to call colleagues. We welcome your calls, e-mails—your input into helping us keep and attract vibrant and needed businesses to enhance the quality of life for all residents here in Lancaster County.

David K. Nikoloff  
Executive Director



Beth Wood Bergman, EEDC; Peter Whipple, Borough Manager; and John Biemiller, EDC, outside historic Boiler House to be renovated as part of the Downtown Elizabethtown Master Plan.

## EDC Finance Feature

# EDC Finance Corporation Toolbox Includes SBA 504 Loans

EDC Finance Corporation offers local business owners diverse tools and strategies. One that has helped fund a bakery, a golf course, a hotel and a manufacturing business is the Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 Loan Program.

EDC assistant director John Biemiller explains that this direct-lending option differs from other SBA programs, which are guarantee programs operated through banks. The 504 loans are administered through economic development lending organizations. EDC Finance Corporation partners with a sister organization in Chester County, SEED Co. or the South Eastern Economic Development Company of PA, to process these loans.

The loans are especially attractive because they offer a long-term, fixed rate. In most cases, the borrower can put up as little as 10%, with the SBA loan covering 40% and the

bank lending 50%. That compares favorably with commercial real estate loans, which often require 20-25% borrower equity. Biemiller also praises the 504s because they are flexible and available to most any qualifying for-profit business with fewer than 500 employees. "Most of those we serve are existing businesses seeking to expand; we help fill the gaps in their financing plans." Borrowers can expect a turnaround of between 30 and 90 days from the time they begin the process to receiving a commitment letter.

Business owners interested in learning more about SBA 504 loans may contact John Biemiller at (717) 397-4046 or email him at [biemiller@edclancaster.com](mailto:biemiller@edclancaster.com).



\$200,000 SBA 504 loan assists this construction company with a building purchase and renovation.



## EDC Feature

# Fertilizing Growth in Elizabethtown

With a vision and a plan in place, the Elizabethtown Economic

Development Corporation, along with Borough and Masonic Village officials, set in motion steps to significantly enhance its community. These organizations worked to develop a commercial project, now titled Sycamore Square, on lands of the Masonic Village. However, one important parcel for the project was missing—the former Farmers Fertilizer 1.7-acre tract consisting of several buildings in disrepair and a pivotal piece to advancing the proposed commercial/professional office complex.

Realizing that the entire Sycamore Square complex hinged on the acquisition of the fertilizer property, the Elizabethtown Economic Development Corporation

(EEDC) requested assistance from the Economic Development Company of Lancaster County (EDC) for the purchase and demolition/clean-up costs of the property—a loan of nearly \$175,000. This collaborative effort has been strongly supported by Elizabethtown Borough Manager Peter Whipple, who praised the partnership between the two EDCs and sees the loan "as a green light for a cornerstone project for the Borough."

"It's precisely the kind of initiative the Economic Development Company of Lancaster County advocates and hopes to pursue with other municipalities and development organizations," says David Nikoloff, executive director of EDC. "The project meshes perfectly with the goals of LancasterProsper, specifically to help the boroughs and Lancaster City overcome obstacles to development."



## LancasterProsper: Focus on Entrepreneurs

Attracting and supporting entrepreneurs is one of the seven pillars of the LancasterProsper initiative. The effort is alive and well reports Ira Wolfe, an entrepreneur himself and founder of the consulting company Success Performance Solutions, who chairs the Entrepreneurship Action Group.

Over the past year, the committee has been focused on better understanding its role and the needs of those it serves. One of the strategies it has used is a series of breakfast meetings. The first, held in November, was for local entrepreneurs at various stages of business development. At the second breakfast in April, providers of business support services gathered to share their views. “We wanted to know what was going on and to find out if entrepreneurship is ‘working’ in Lancaster County,” explains Wolfe.

### Listening...and Learning

Listening proved valuable. “The meeting with the entrepreneurs changed our perspective on the problem. We had originally planned to focus on making it easier to start businesses, but we learned that in fact it’s very easy to launch a start-up here.” The bigger challenge for entrepreneurs is getting the assistance to take businesses to the next level once they’re established.

“We learned there was money and help for writing business plans, mentoring, coaching, etc. But existing businesses attempting to grow larger need equity capital.”

Wolfe suggests two explanations for this. The first is that Lancaster County is in a conservative region of the country with a traditionally strong work ethic. “People here want to do things for themselves. And where they



Ira Wolfe

may like the idea of a loan, they don’t particularly like the idea of a venture capitalist looking at their books or partnering in their business.” The second reason is that many entrepreneurs lack the skill to expand their businesses.

“Entrepreneurs are often very good technically—at catering or writing software, for example—but they continue to work in the business, not on the business.” Funders want to see a skill level commensurate with running a larger business.

The meetings also helped the committee see that there is no lack of resources for entrepreneurs in the county, as they had thought. Would-be entrepreneurs can download a hefty Entrepreneurship Resource Guide for Lancaster County under Business Resources at [www.edclancaster.com](http://www.edclancaster.com). In fact, the problem may be information overload. Wolfe says there are so many

resources that it can become confusing to sort them out. The committee is working on solutions, such as a web or phone portal that could help entrepreneurs quickly identify the most valuable assistance for their needs—a kind of one-stop shopping.

A third breakfast is planned for this fall to get input from lenders. Meanwhile, the committee will begin to act on the information it has already gleaned about entrepreneurs’ needs and how LancasterProsper can meet them.

## Making a Difference “Giving Back to the Community”



John M. Levitski

Lancaster County offers a unique quality of life,” says John Levitski, Regional Community Relations Director at PPL and an EDC Board Member who chairs the LancasterProsper Marketing Strategy Group and co-chairs the EDC Membership Committee. “As a good corporate neighbor we want to give back and contribute to that quality of life. Our

providing a responsible foundation for future growth.” The balance is key—maintaining what Lancaster County offers with its pristine land and preserved farms while planning for housing, business and labor trends.

“EDC is a win for everyone,” reflects Levitski. “There are collective benefits for all; when EDC’s successful, we’re successful, too.”

Levitski invites Lancaster County businesses and organizations to give back to their community by supporting the efforts of the Economic Development Company of Lancaster County. He encourages all to call 397-4046 to learn more and become a Member.

When he’s not busy with his work as PPL’s Regional Director and media spokesperson, you’ll find Levitski and his wife, Kathleen, catching some R & R on their 22’ FourWinns on the waters outside of Havre de Grace, MD., or enjoying some landscaping work around their house in Penn Township.

## “EDC is a win for everyone...”

Sponsor-level Membership and work with EDC gives us a way to do that.”

PPL has been involved with EDC since its inception in 1960. “There have been lots of wins for us over the years,” he says. Most recently, the LancasterProsper County-wide plan with its seven action strategies is a prime example of how EDC collaboratively contributes to the progress of the County’s economic life.

By working with EDC, political, business and community leaders, we’re

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## Q1 & Q2 Show Great Progress

*W*e've witnessed the first pitch plus a concert at the new Clipper Magazine Stadium," notes R. Scott Smith, Jr., EDC's president



**R. Scott Smith, Jr.**

with businesses, municipalities and not-for-profits showing their support for EDC's efforts with increased Membership commitments.

since the first of the year. "It's very exciting to see this project become a reality after so many people worked so hard. And it's especially satisfying to know that EDC played a significant part in something the entire region can enjoy."

Smith reports additional areas of progress in the first quarter:

- Early responses to the May kick-off of the EDC Membership Campaign appear encouraging

- The Northwest Corridor redevelopment, that includes the Armstrong site, is progressing with plans of generating a vibrant area of the City near the Stadium.
- The LancasterProsper seven action strategy committees are fully engaged. A research capacity, marketing efforts for attracting businesses to the City and boroughs throughout the County, entrepreneur support and facilitating the

growth of industry-driven centers of excellence are just some of the issues being tackled.

"All in all," says Smith, "I'm feeling good about how the year is progressing. We're off to a great start."

Finally, Smith thanks the businesses, organizations and municipalities that have

generously supported EDC by joining or renewing their membership since the May Membership Campaign Kick-off. Considering the economic and community development initiatives currently in the pipeline, he encourages everyone to contact the EDC office to learn more about becoming a Member. By

joining, businesses play an important part in the exciting, yet balanced economic growth of this great County.



**EDC welcomes new 2005 members to the Board of Directors:**  
(from left to right) Michael G. Fessler, UGI Utilities;  
Jeffrey Renninger, Sovereign Bank; John M. Levitski, PPL Electric Utilities